



Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting
Wednesday, January 10th, 2024, 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Attendees

Bella Bledsoe
Bridie Johnston
Gina Johnston
Jacquie Cordova
Peggy Fulder
Vincent Vitale

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, and December Minutes

The agenda and minutes are approved. The group requested to add two items to the list, the SI Admin Rate and the DWR Salmon Study.

Financials

The stated balance is \$18,493.09. Money is still allocated for the Maidu Plant Project (\$1,000.00), 2023 Water Quality Testing (\$4,125.00), and SI testing support (\$1,255.69). The working balance is \$12,112.40. Bella also requested an SI Admin rate increase from 2% to 5% to cover Sierra Institute's rising administrative costs. The group made a motion to approve the new rate; the group voted to approve 5% as an updated SI admin rate.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring

- Gina circulated her draft of the water quality report but did not expect everyone to have it read by the meeting. We can cover this again at the February meeting. Bridie started reading it, and she thinks it is great so far. She likes the glossary. Bridie also liked the concluding statement about cost and parameters. She really appreciates these add-ons.
- Gina would like feedback from others also, and if there are things folks want to see added.
- Gina also talked to Scott about soil washing into Lake Almanor and was curious if he was seeing that pattern at Lake Oroville. Scott told Gina that DWR does not take those measurements at Lake Oroville. So Scott did not have anything to reference. Gina thinks we have a unique problem; the impacts of the Dixie Fire are causing a lot of material to flow into the Lake and affecting the oxygen content in the lake. Gina thinks other lakes may be experiencing this also, but she has not been able to find much about it in the literature yet.
- Dissolved oxygen below the surface dropped off during our sampling this year. In the past, we have had oxygen disappear, but this year, we did not have the plants or the algae. That is the difference. The algae was not there, but we had all this soil present instead. The soil consumed the oxygen and was there all year around.

- We will have to wait for the sediment to get flushed out of the Lake. The timing will depend on how wet of a spring we have. Gina is glad we have snow starting to fall. Sediment levels in the Lake also depend on how much logging takes place this year. The logging really stirs up the soil because it is not stabilized. There is very little effort to hold soil in place. People are more interested in pulling the trees out.
- Post-fire, the focus was on dealing with displaced people, hazard trees, and roads. And no one could have predicted that 2023 would be such a wet year. The amount of snow actually impeded efforts to hold soil. There was so much snow that any effort to hold the soil was covered up.
- All of the soil disturbance during the fire, including dozer lines, had a huge impact.
- Tom suggested we write an article about the evidence of the soil impact. Just a page or two. We can circulate it to agencies and beyond and say we have observed this and that there are serious impacts from soil erosion.

Maidu Summit Consortium

- Lorena was not present, but Peggy said MSC had not received the LAWG brochures yet for some reason. We will hope they show up or get returned to SI.

FRLT Lake Almanor Conservation Easement

- Link to learn more about the easement:
<https://www.frlt.org/blog/lake-almanor-conservation-story/>
- The FRLT closed on the conservation easement on Lake Almanor. The easement is 29,000 acres. The whole area is protected from development. This is also a permanent easement, so if portions of the lake are sold, then the easement survives those transfers and is attached to the property. PGE retains rights of ownership.
- The easement restricts dumping in and around the Lake and limits the use of vehicles around the Lake.
- PG&E is happy to grant boat access to the Lake and have trails around the Lake. Hydrologic things are NOT in the easement, like the thermal curtain.
- "In partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and the Stewardship Council, FRLT has permanently protected 29,057 acres of publicly important lands and waters at Lake Almanor with a conservation easement. This conservation easement held by FRLT prevents subdivision and detrimental land use changes within the protected property, including the reservoir itself. PG&E will continue to own and operate Lake Almanor and manage recreation facilities and leases.
- The Lake Almanor conservation easement is part of a larger effort by the California Public Utilities Commission, PG&E, the Stewardship Council, and a variety of stakeholders to conserve 140,000 acres of PG&E watershed lands throughout California for ongoing public benefit. Approximately 44,000 acres of these watershed lands are within the upper North Fork Feather River Watershed. FRLT is the local conservation organization designated to hold conservation easements on these lands. Feather River Watershed lands protected by FRLT through this project include Lake Almanor, **Bucks Lake**, **Mountain Meadows Reservoir**, Butt Valley Reservoir, and five properties now owned and conserved by the **Maidu Summit Consortium** including Tásmam Koyóm (Humbug Valley). "

- Tom reiterated that ownership stays with PG&E, but FRLT can help manage the properties by forcing PG&E to abide by the agreement. The easement only impacts lands owned by PG&E.
- There is a lot more info in the story map. Take a look at the resource provided above!
- Bridie also commented on the fish study circulated by DWR and said she looked at the timeline graph. The fry are out in March or April. Very cool. They are really making progress on this study.

New Year Visioning: Goals for 2024

- Tom - I would like to see us find support to wrap Mountain Meadows Reservoir into our program as well. The more we understand about the environment around us, the better. We need to develop the financial and labor support to expand to Mountain Meadows.
- One idea is to ask Jeanie if they have or know of any monitoring funds to sample water quality at Mountain Meadows, especially after the meadow restoration project.
- Gina - we want to find out what kind of algae is in the Reservoir. That was the purpose of our study that we proposed to the Westwood Chamber of Commerce--to identify the types of algae. We were not a good fit for that source.
- The group was also interested in continuing to think about how to protect Goodrich Springs. Maybe LAWG should ask Bennie Johnson to join a meeting and discuss this topic more with her.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: February 14th